

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): Method of packaging a thick but malleable frozen dessert and dispensing the frozen dessert under pressure in an expanded state, the method comprising:

placing ~~the~~ a partially frozen dessert in a first compartment of a rigid receptacle equipped with a dispensing member and a piston that divides the receptacle into the first compartment and a second compartment, then, after having put the dispensing member in a closed position, pressurizing the rigid receptacle by injecting a propellant gas into the second compartment of the rigid receptacle to a pressure great enough to ensure dispensing, given the consistency of the partially frozen dessert to be dispensed and characteristics of the dispensing member comprising:

~~using~~ injecting the propellant gas in the second compartment which is virtually insoluble in the product to be dispensed;

~~using~~ injecting an expansion gas in the first compartment which is different from the propellant gas and highly soluble in the partially frozen dessert to be dispensed in order to expand the partially frozen dessert when it is dispensed, the amount of expansion gas used depending on the degree of expansion desired on dispensing, the expansion gas being homogeneously dissolved in the partially frozen dessert by putting the expansion gas in contact with the partially frozen dessert ~~product~~ in a freezer and

passing the rigid receptacle having the partially frozen dessert through a freezing tunnel at a temperature that allows the partially frozen dessert to form a pasty state then dispensing it by opening the dispensing member, the ~~said~~ partially frozen dessert being expanded to the desired degree, determined prior to filling, by expanding the expansion gas which is completely dissolved therein.

Claim 2 (currently amended): ~~The method~~Method according to claim 1, wherein the frozen dessert is an ice-cream product, the method further comprising treating an ice-cream mix in a freezer, which is supplied with expansion gas so as to partially freeze and partially expand the ice-cream mix, under temperature and pressure conditions promoting sufficient dissolution of the expansion gas in the ice-cream mix so as to provide an expanded ice-cream product.

Claim 3 (currently amended): ~~The method~~Method according to claim 1, wherein a gas that is highly soluble in the partially frozen dessert is used as the expansion gas.

Claim 4 (currently amended): ~~The method~~Method according to claim 1, wherein nitrogen (N₂) or compressed air having a dewpoint less than the minimum temperature to which the rigid receptacle will be subjected between manufacture of the product and its use is used as the propellant gas.

Claim 5 (currently amended): ~~The method~~Method according to claim 1, comprising placing a partly frozen and partly expanded mix in the rigid receptacle by means of a metering device ensuring the pressure is kept as close as possible to the initial pressure in the freezer, in the pipes and in the metering unit so as to limit the expansion of the volume of the ~~product~~partly frozen mix during filling by partial expansion of the expansion gas.

Claim 6 (currently amended): ~~The method~~Method according to claim 1, comprising filling the partially frozen dessert into the first compartment with ~~using~~ a metering nozzle moving with an up and down movement as a filling device, allowing filling by rising from the bottom of the rigid receptacle so as to optimize the filling and to prevent the formation of pockets free of the partially frozen dessert~~product~~.

Claim 7 (currently amended): ~~The method~~Method according to claim 1, wherein the rigid receptacle is filled with the partially frozen dessert before expansion of the partially frozen dessert occurs.

Claim 8 (currently amended): ~~Method~~The method according to claim 1, wherein the rigid receptacle is filled with the partially frozen dessert through the dispensing member, a piston being positioned adjacent and under the dispensing member prior to the dispensing member filling the rigid receptacle.

Claim 9 (currently amended): ~~The method~~Method according to claim 1, wherein the ~~product~~partially frozen dessert to be packaged comprising the amount of expansion gas needed to obtain the desired expanded state of the dispensed frozen dessert ~~product~~ is introduced into the first compartment of the rigid receptacle, and the propellant gas is introduced into the second compartment of the rigid receptacle at the pressure desired for the dispensing.

Claim 10 (canceled):

Claim 11 (currently amended): ~~The method~~Method according to claim 1, wherein the first compartment is closed by the dispensing member while the second compartment has a valve enabling the propellant gas to be injected, the ~~product~~partially frozen dessert to be dispensed being introduced into the rigid receptacle from ~~the~~a side of the first compartment.

Claim 12 (currently amended): ~~The method~~Method according to claim 1, comprising lowering the temperature of the partially frozen dessert to a value below -10°C [[.]], and it is stored and used by the consumer at this temperature.

Claim 13 (currently amended): ~~The method~~Method according to claim 1, wherein the frozen dessert is an ice-cream product, the method further comprising treating an ice-cream mix in a freezer, which is supplied with expansion gas so as to partially freeze and partially expand the said mix, the freezer operating at a temperature of about -8°C . to -12°C [[.]] at an output and at a constant pressure equal to atmospheric pressure up to 10 bars above atmospheric pressure.

Claim 14 (currently amended): ~~The method~~Method according to claim 1, wherein the expansion gas is selected from the group consisting of nitrous oxide (N_2O), carbon dioxide and combinations thereof.

Claim 15 (currently amended): ~~The method~~Method according to claim 1, wherein the temperature of the ~~product~~partially frozen dessert is lowered to a temperature ranging from -15° C[[.]] to -20° C.

Claim 16 (currently amended): Method of packaging a frozen dessert, and for dispensing it under pressure in the expanded state, in a system wherein ~~the product~~a partially frozen dessert is placed in a first compartment of a rigid receptacle equipped with a dispensing member and a piston that divides the receptacle into the first compartment and a second compartment, the rigid receptacle being pressurized by a propellant gas comprising the steps of:

~~using~~injecting a propellant gas into the second compartment, the propellant gas being
~~which is~~virtually insoluble in the productpartially frozen dessert to be dispensed ~~is chosen, the~~
~~propellant gas being injected into the second compartment;~~

~~using~~injecting an expansion gas into the first compartment, the expansion gas being
~~which is~~different from the propellant gas and highly soluble in the productpartially frozen
dessert to be dispensed, the expansion gas also being homogeneously dissolved in the ~~product~~
partially frozen dessert to be dispensed by putting the expansion gas in contact with the said
~~product~~partially frozen dessert in a freezer, the expansion gas being introduced into the first
compartment; and

passing the rigid receptacle having the ~~product~~partially frozen dessert through a freezing
tunnel at a temperature that allows the ~~product~~partially frozen dessert to form a pasty state then
dispensing it by opening the dispensing member, the partially frozen dessert ~~product~~being
expanded by expansion of the expansion gas that is dissolved therein.